

Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting:	8 June 2023
Subject:	Mid Devon's Prosperity Programme: Update
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Richard Marsh, Director of Place
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	All – District wide
Enclosures:	[any appendices – list here]

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on the progress under the Shared Prosperity Investment Plan (Year 1: 2022/23); and
- Inform Members of the Year 2 (2023/24) Delivery Plan for Mid Devon's Prosperity Programmes.

Recommendation: That members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

2.0 Background to the Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund

2.1 Under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the Government allocated £1,069,159 over a three-year period (2022-2025) to Mid Devon, to support economic development and community cohesion. The Government also allocated £816,672 of rural uplift over a two-year period (2023-2025) for Mid Devon to build on and complement the SPF under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

- 2.2 The Investment Plans pulled together a series of projects identified through engagement meetings with business and community stakeholders (as well as Members) that address challenges facing our local economy.
- 2.3 The Economic Development Team received confirmation on 5 December 2022 of our successful funding bid for SPF from the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC). However, the funding was annualised, meaning Mid Devon District Council secured £67,748 for capital projects and £61,398 for revenue projects in Year One (plus a further £20,000 capacity funding to cover the costs of forming the bid). The funds for Year One SPF were received on 31 January 2023, which gave the economic development function just two months to deliver the first year's programme.
- 2.4 This report outlines a summary of progress for delivery against the first year of the SPF Investment Plan. Due to the short timescales given for delivery (2 months), DLUHC permitted Local Authorities to underspend on year one on the basis that the funding was committed to projects within year two.
- 2.5 The end of year report for 2022/23 SPF was submitted to DLUHC on 2 May 2023 and are awaiting receipt of year two funding (year from 1st April). Confirmation of our successful funding bid for REPF was received on 6 April 2023 but we are also awaiting receipt of this funding.
- 2.6 We are required to spend year two funding by 31 March 2024. This report also outlines the proposed elements for delivery within Year Two to ensure effective spend of the funding within the required timescale. Match-funded elements include those committed by partner contributions.

3.0 Year One Summary

- 3.1 In line with the Investment Plan, the Delivery Plan focused on the following areas of intervention:

Direct Delivery Projects

- Love Your Town Centre
- Field to Fork
- Visitor Economy
- Work Hubs
- Business Innovation and Growth (Year 2 onwards)

External Delivery Projects

- Business Innovation Centre
- Business Innovation Outreach
- Business Support Programme

- 3.2 All projects commenced on schedule with the focus of year one on launching schemes. A number of grants were awarded supporting town centres and work hubs and work has started on creating a new business innovation centre. Some further grant decisions were on hold during the pre-election period and awaiting a new Panel to make award decisions. Through engagement activities and promotion, we received a high level of interest in the grant schemes with businesses being supported through the process and expect a number of these enquiries to convert to submitted applications this quarter (in Year Two).
- 3.3 Some of the outputs are measured at point of completion rather than at point of support (eg improvements to commercial buildings). Due to the limited time period for year one, we anticipate achievement of a number of outputs from year one projects over the coming two quarters eg a number of events / activities financially supported in year one take place this summer. The first phase of the new Business Innovation Hub held a launch event/initial event on 4 April – which MDDC officers were involved in.
- 3.4 Business engagement activities and enquiries in the schemes resulted in a non-material change within the Supporting Local Business priority: we have reinvested the funds allocated to E16 to E22 but anticipate meeting the outputs originally placed against E16 through match-support work with the Love Your Town Centre and Business Support projects.
- 3.5 Detailed in the report below is a breakdown of spend and progress against each of the specific projects.

4.0 Love Your Town Centre

- 4.1 'Love Your Town Centre' is a flexible funding mechanism offering small grants through a competitive bidding process with four strands aimed at improving the town centre and increasing the vibrancy and vitality of our three main markets towns: Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton. This includes:
- Shopfront Enhancement Schemes
 - Vacant Shop and Business Growth Scheme (Year 2 onwards)
 - Vibrant Town Centre Scheme
 - Digital High Streets Scheme (Year 2 onwards)

Area of Intervention	Year One		Year One			
	Targets (ALL Years)	Achieved (Y1)	SPF (cap)	SPF (rev)	SPF Spend	Match Spend
E1 Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets			£ 1,394.00	£ -	£ -	
a) Number of commercial buildings completed or improved	23	0				
b) Number of vacant units filled	9	7				
E6 Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities				£ 2,620.00	£ 2,230.00	£ 19,770.00
a) Number of organisations receiving grants	22	3				
b) Number of local events or activities supported	22	5				
c) Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support	6	1				
E16 Open markets and town centre retail and service sector			£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving grants	23	0				
Administration				£ 167.00	£ -	£ -
Total			£ 1,394.00	£ 2,787.00	£ 2,230.00	£ 19,770.00

4.2 Shopfront Enhancement Schemes: This Scheme offers grants of up to £2,500 to help improve shopfronts or signage and supports E1. We received 16 enquiries about the shopfront scheme in 2022/23, five of which applied. Of those applications, we awarded two (with funding awarded on completion so will show in Year Two figures), one was declined (we cannot award funding retrospectively for works already completed) and two are in progress awaiting supporting papers. We have since received an additional five enquiries, with two more applications ready for approval by the new funding panel. This Scheme will continue in Year Two.

4.3 Vibrant Town Centre Scheme: This Scheme offers grants of up to £5,000 to businesses working in partnership (or £1,000 for individual businesses) to go towards town centre projects that drive new footfall through events, cultural or arts activities and small scale public realm improvements. It supports E6 of the SPF Intervention Plan. We received six applications for this Scheme, four were awarded funding and one deferred to the next round (opened in May).

4.4 Proposal for Year Two

BUDGET (DELIVERY)					
YEAR TWO					
Element		SPF	REPF	MATCH	TOTAL
Business Growth Scheme					
Empty Unit Fit Out Grant		£ 4,417.00		£ 5,000.00	£ 9,417.00
Vibrant Town Centres					
> Crediton		£ -		£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00
> Cullompton		£ -		£ 15,000.00	£ 15,000.00
> Tiverton		£ 6,072.00		£ 3,928.00	£ 10,000.00
Shopfront Enhancement Scheme					
> Crediton		£ -		£ 13,817.50	£ 13,817.50
> Cullompton		£ -		£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00
> Tiverton		£ -		£ 15,000.00	£ 15,000.00
Digital High Street					
Digital High Street Grant		£ -		£ 20,000.00	£ 20,000.00
Administration		£ 530.00		£ -	£ 530.00
TOTAL		£ 11,019.00	£ -	£ 92,745.50	£ 103,764.50

4.5 In addition to the existing Shopfront Enhancement and Vibrant Town Centres Schemes, we are launching the Business Growth and Digital High Street Schemes under Year Two.

4.6 The Business Growth Scheme is intended to complement the existing Shopfront Enhancement Schemes by offering fit-out grants of up to £2,500 to SMEs / community groups, to help bring new commercial, community and leisure opportunities into the town centre. This funding can be used to support businesses moving into empty units. It can also be used to support other capital improvement works not covered by the existing enhancement

schemes that still meet the key outputs. The SPF will be allocated before the match-funding from the Economic Development's team budget. If we receive too few applications, this funding can be used to support the shopfront scheme instead to ensure the SPF is allocated within the required timescale as they both deliver against E1.

4.7 The Digital High Street Scheme is new for Year Two. It offers grants of up to £1,500 for town centre businesses to establish or upgrade e-commerce through websites and equipment.

4.8 The Economic Development Team has a rapport with the business and community groups in each of the main towns and will actively promote these opportunities through various communication channels.

5.0 Field to Fork

5.1 In response to the needs of the agricultural sector we have the Field to Fork Project. In this project we hope to work with farmers, local producers, retailers and hospitality businesses to strengthen the local food supply chain, by

- promoting direct supply through box schemes, farmers markets, farm shops, local packers / distributors, and local independent retailers
- linking local food producers and local food businesses (retailers and hospitality) through 'meet the buyer' events, and
- stimulating demand through 'Buy Local' campaigns, promoting local markets, and expanding and promoting food tourism.

5.2 This project focuses on supporting local producers in Mid Devon and encouraging business growth either through transition from producing, to supplying and retailing or expansion into food tourism (such as food tours and experiences or farm shops).

Area of Intervention	Year One		Year One			
	Targets (ALL Years)	Achieved (Y1)	SPF (cap)	SPF (rev)	SPF Spend	Match Spend
E17 Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally			£ -	£ 4,965.00	£ 1,000.00	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	9	0				
b) Number of people reached	1000	0				
c) Number of local events or activities supported	15	0				
d) Increased visitor numbers	0	0				
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems			£ -	£ 4,926.00	£ 4,500.00	£ 1,500.00
a) Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	20	0				
b) Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be enterprise ready	4	0				
c) Jobs created as a result of support	10	0				
d) Number of enterprises engaged in new markets	0	0				
e) Number of new enterprises created	2	0				
f) Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	0	0				
Administration				£ 414.00	£ -	£ -
Total			£ -	£10,305.00	£ 5,500.00	£ 1,500.00

5.3 There are three primary areas of activity under this intervention: promoting direct supply, linking local food producers, and local food initiatives.

5.4 In Year One, we supported free listings in the Visit Mid Devon guide for our farm shops, farmers' markets and food tourism businesses; this supports E17. In support of E23, we offered grants to the farmers' markets operating in our three main town centres for the purpose of the funding being used to support incentive schemes to encourage new producers to attend. Two of the markets accepted that grant. We also supported Mid Devon Show with a grant to enable Mid Devon producers (who haven't attended with the previous 3 years) to trade at this year's and next year's shows.

5.5 Year Two Proposal

BUDGET (DELIVERY)					
YEAR TWO					
Element		SPF	REPF	MATCH	TOTAL
Promoting Direct Supply					
> Meet the Producer Campaign		£ 5,000.00			£ 5,000.00
> Buy Local Campaigns		£ 1,454.00			£ 1,454.00
> Showcasing Events		£ 3,000.00			£ 3,000.00
Linking Local Food Producers					
> Meet the Buyer Event		£ 6,000.00			£ 6,000.00
> Networking Membership		£ 2,977.00			£ 2,977.00
Local Food Initiatives					
> Food Innovation Grant Scheme		£ 4,391.00	£ 25,000.00		£ 29,391.00
> Food Tourism Grant Scheme			£ 25,000.00		£ 25,000.00
Administration		£ 1,202.00		£ -	£ 1,202.00
TOTAL		£ 24,024.00	£ 50,000.00	£ -	£ 74,024.00

5.6 Promoting Direct Supply: the team has compiled promotional features for producers in Mid Devon to showcase on our digital channels. Funding will be used for photography and sponsoring reach along with published features in local publications and food magazines to feature our producers.

5.7 Linking Local Food Producers: we are working with Devon County Council on arranging meet the buyer events to connect our producers with local hospitality businesses and independent retailers. Alongside this will be featured support workshops for those sectors.

5.8 Local Food Initiatives: Using the Rural England Prosperity Funding, we will run an open-application capital grants programme of grants towards equipment needed to support businesses develop, produce and market local food and drink products and its direct supply to consumers. This will also support projects to grow food tourism (such as farm shops and tours/experiences). We have allocated some SPF funding to support revenue elements of the successful projects (such as promotional activities or training).

6.0 Sustainable Visitor Economy

- 6.1 This project is the development and piloting of a Mid Devon Walking Festival to encourage more people to explore the local area and increase visitor numbers, particularly at the close of the main holiday season. It is complemented by wider promotional activities to raise awareness of Mid Devon as a visitor destination, increase footfall and support our tourism businesses.

Area of Intervention	Year One		Year One			
	Targets (ALL Years)	Achieved (Y1)	SPF (cap)	SPF (rev)	SPF Spend	Match Spend
E8 Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area			£ -	£ 4,765.00	£ 2,645.21	£ -
a) Number of people reached	200	95				
b) Increased number of web searches for a place	8605	23600				
E17 Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally			£ -	£ 4,765.00	£ 4,500.00	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	9	31				
b) Number of people reached	1000	95				
c) Number of local events or activities supported	3	4				
d) Increased visitor numbers	11200	0				
Administration				£ 398.00	£ -	£ -
Total			£ -	£ 9,928.00	£ 7,145.21	£ -

- 6.2 Walking Festival: The Festival is due to take place in September 2024. Work started in Year One on preparation including creating branding and an advert campaign at railway stations along the Paddington to Plymouth line. Match-funded elements will be shown in Year Two. In addition, we commissioned a supplier to improve the Search Engine Optimisation for the Visit Mid Devon website to improve the reach and web search results for Mid Devon places.
- 6.3 Wider Campaigns: As part of English Tourism Week (17-26 March), we ran a series of sponsored posts on social media highlighting our attractions, events, and accommodation businesses. This delivered a number of outputs for the project, with events and enterprises supported under E17 both above target.
- 6.4 **Year Two Proposal**

BUDGET (DELIVERY)					
YEAR TWO					
Element		SPF	REPF	MATCH	TOTAL
Walking Festival					
> Event Organisation		£ 2,842.79			£ 2,842.79
> Sculpture Trail		£ 15,000.00		£ 10,000.00	£ 25,000.00
> Willow Trail		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Promoting Mid Devon					
> Railway Ads		£ -	£ -	£ 5,162.00	£ 5,162.00
> Visitor Signage		£ 1,000.00	£ -		£ 1,000.00
> VMD Campaigns		£ -	£ -	£ 7,000.00	£ 7,000.00
> SEO Optimisation		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Promoting Leisure and Tourism Businesses					
> Social Media Influencer		£ 1,000.00			£ 1,000.00
> VMD Campaigns		£ 1,000.00			£ 1,000.00
> VMD Business Awards		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Sustainable Visitor Economy					
> Tourism Innovation Grant Scheme			£ 50,000.00		£ 50,000.00
> Showcasing Equipment			£ -		£ -
Administration		£ 1,168.00		£ -	£ 1,168.00
TOTAL		£ 22,010.79	£ 50,000.00	£ 22,162.00	£ 94,172.79

- 6.5 Year Two will focus on stakeholder engagement and preparation work for the Walking Festival. We propose to feature five strategic walks across the District as part of the pilot festival and connect with local attractions/groups that organise guided walks to include them in the event. 2024 sees the 50th anniversary of the Tiverton Canal Company and, with the intention of encouraging visitors along all parts of the Grand Western Canal and connecting the Canal to Tiverton's town centre, we propose a partnership project with them of a sculpture trail during the summer holidays of 2024 to tie in with this event. This project will deliver easy-to-evidence outputs across E8 and E17.
- 6.6 A series of promotional campaigns through the Visit Mid Devon project will support additional outputs under E8 (promoting Mid Devon). We have also allocated £1,000 of SPF towards the preliminary work on visitor signage (such as planning application fees or design elements) ready for delivery of signage in Year Three.
- 6.7 Under E17, we have allocated £1,000 towards sponsored promotional campaigns (supporting tourism businesses) and £1,000 to pay for a social media influencer to visit our attractions and promote them on their extended channels. In Year Three, we plan to host a Mid Devon business awards event that we would seek to run with an external partner. This is included in the project plan for initial conversations with spend and delivery in next year.

6.8 Using the Rural England Prosperity Funding, we will run an open-application capital grants programme towards the development of quality visitor attractions and experiences to expand the tourism offer.

7.0 Work Hubs

7.1 The Work Hub Development Scheme offers grants of up to £20,000 to local businesses to support incubator space and work hub development to create small flexible office and workshop space for start-up and growing micro-businesses.

Area of Intervention	Year One		Year One			
	Targets (ALL Years)	Achieved (Y1)	SPF (cap)	SPF (rev)	SPF Spend	Match Spend
E2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure projects			£ 12,604.00	£ -	£ 12,604.00	£ -
a) Number of organisations receiving grants		3				
b) Number of amenities/facilities created or improved		3				
c) Increased users of facilities/amenities (%)		10				
E22 Enterprise infrastructure & employment / innovation sites			£ 22,550.00	£ 9,628.00	£ 20,633.43	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving grants		5				
b) Number of commercial buildings developed or improved		6				
c) M2 of commercial buildings developed or improved		470				
d) Increased amount of investment (£)	£	60,200.00				
e) Number of premises with improved digital connectivity		1				
Administration				£ 3,166.00	£ -	£ -
Total			£ 35,154.00	£ 12,794.00	£ 33,237.43	£ -

7.2 Year One of this Scheme focussed on supporting the existing work hubs to grow their offer. We received two applications and one further expression of interest. Both applications were successful for creation of improved/extended work hub space; one in Crediton and one in Cullompton. The outputs for premises improved will be recorded upon completion of those funded activities.

BUDGET (DELIVERY)					
Element	YEAR TWO				
	SPF	REPF	MATCH	TOTAL	
Work Hub Development					
> Work Hub Development Grant	£ 75,108.57	£ -		£ 75,108.57	
> Work Hub Study		£ -	£ 20,000.00	£ 20,000.00	
> Market Centre Improvements		£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00	
Administration	£ 6,681.00		£ -	£ 6,681.00	
TOTAL	£ 81,789.57	£ -	£ 25,000.00	£ 106,789.57	

7.3 Proposal for Year Two

7.4 The Work Hub Development Grant Scheme will continue in Year Two. We will expand the applications to include new and prospective work hubs as well as existing.

7.5 We have £25,000 of earmarked reserves to support a study to identify the work hub growth potential across the District and areas of need (and type of need). Part of this funding will also be used to support improvement works to the Market Centre to market this as a potential work hub site.

8.0 Business Innovation & Growth

8.1 This intervention includes elements of external delivery (the innovation hub and outreach programme) and new for Year Two is the launch of a grant scheme.

8.2 The Business Innovation Hub and Outreach Programme is being delivered in partnership with Petroc College and sees the creation of a Business Innovation Hub in the district as a focus for indigenous innovation and product development. The Hub will provide local start-ups and micro-businesses with access to a wide range of advanced technology-based facilities, all designed to nurture business growth and develop product ideas and concepts. This will include spaces for design, development, 3D scanning and printing, and clean room manufacturing, as well as spaces for conferencing and hot desk working.

8.3 The physical hub will be complemented by a programme of outreach and knowledge transfer activities, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship across the District's Work Hub network to raise awareness of innovation possibilities and to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit across the area.

Area of Intervention	Year One		Year One			
	Targets (ALL Years)	Achieved (Y1)	SPF (cap)	SPF (rev)	SPF Spend	Match Spend
E21 Development of innovation infrastructure at the local level			£ 31,200.00	£ -	£ 30,000.00	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	100	0				
b) Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be enterprise ready	30	0				
c) Jobs created as a result of support	14	0				
d) Jobs safeguarded as a result of support	4	0				
e) Number of new enterprises created	9	0				
d) Number of new to market products	12	0				
e) Number of businesses with improved productivity	25	0				
f) Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	13	0				
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems			£ -	£ 16,750.00	£ 16,750.00	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	100	0				
b) Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be enterprise ready	30	0				
c) Jobs created as a result of support	4	0				
d) Number of enterprises engaged in new markets	4	0				
e) Number of new enterprises created	9	0				
f) Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	9	0				
Administration				£ 697.00	£ -	£ -
Total			£ 31,200.00	£ 17,447.00	£ 46,750.00	£ -

8.4 Work started on creating the new physical hub in quarter 4 of 2022/23. The first phase completed and hosted a networking event with Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce on 4 April 2023. Due to the tight timescales, the consultation business breakfast event planned for 31 March

was postponed to 9 June. This event will give businesses the opportunity to learn about the new Hub and feedback on their needs regarding innovation workshop space.

8.5 Proposal for Year Two

BUDGET (DELIVERY)					
YEAR TWO					
Element		SPF	REPF	MATCH	TOTAL
Business Innovation & Growth					
> Innovation and Technology Grants		£ -	£ 54,168.00		£ 54,168.00
> Innovation Centre		£ 22,000.00	£ 50,000.00	£ 30,000.00	£ 102,000.00
> Innovation Outreach		£ 43,000.00	£ -	£ 33,201.00	£ 76,201.00
Administration		£ 2,469.00		£ -	£ 2,469.00
TOTAL		£ 67,469.00	£ 104,168.00	£ 63,201.00	£ 234,838.00

8.6 Innovation and Technology Grants: This is an open-application mixed grants (capital and revenue) programme targeting microbusinesses with innovative ideas and high growth potential to help them buy new equipment, improve processes, buy in specialist support so they can take the next step towards 'transformational' change within their business, increase jobs and support de-carbonisation. The revenue funding is from SPF in Year Three so Year Two will focus on capital projects.

9.0 Business Support Programme

- 9.1 Working in partnership with Devon County Council, we commissioned a package of business support services, which consists of a range of options depending on the needs of the business, including:
- Generic business support, delivered through one-to-one support and workshop modules
 - New employer support, with specific advice and workshop modules focused on helping businesses become employers
 - Green business support, which will complement the existing Low Carbon Devon initiative with further workshops on decarbonisation
 - Start-up support, with more specific advice and workshop modules focused on the needs of new businesses, and
 - Agri-Tech Alliance and events, which will facilitate knowledge exchange/transfer and collaborations between farmers, horticultural, aquacultural and forestry businesses and Agri-Tech developers, academic institutions, sector experts and stakeholders.

Area of Intervention	Year One		Year One			
	Targets (ALL Years)	Achieved (Y1)	SPF (cap)	SPF (rev)	SPF Spend	Match Spend
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems			£ -	£ 7,812.00	£ 7,812.00	£ -
a) Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	125	0				
b) Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be enterprise ready	8	0				
c) Jobs created as a result of support	45	0				
d) Number of enterprises engaged in new markets	0	0				
e) Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	18	0				
Administration				£ 325.00	£ -	£ -
Total			£ -	£ 8,137.00	£ 7,812.00	£ -

9.2 This support project is in a procurement phase, with support due to start in quarter two of this year.

BUDGET (DELIVERY)					
Element	YEAR TWO				
	SPF	REPF	MATCH	TOTAL	
Business Support	£ 75,000.00	£ -		£ 75,000.00	
Administration	£ 3,450.00		£ -	£ 3,450.00	
TOTAL	£ 78,450.00	£ -	£ -	£ 78,450.00	

10.0 General Comments

- 10.1 Year Three sees the introduction of new projects under the People and Skills priority. We are engaging with Devon County Council in Year Two to plan for these projects to start in April/May 2024.
- 10.2 Year Three also sees a new Grant Scheme for “Social Economy”. We will publish this alongside Year Two grants to encourage early expressions of interest. This will allow us to commit spend early in Year Three to allow for delivery of the projects within the required timescale.
- 10.3 All of the Year Two grant schemes will launch end of May/beginning of June with the first funding panel due to take place at the beginning of July. Further funding rounds will be set throughout the year. The Funding Panel will consist of business and sector stakeholders, officers from Economic Development and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration. We are in the process of inviting panel members and confirming dates.

Financial Implications:

First year funding for SPF (2022/23) has been received. Identified match-funding towards these projects is allocated from within the service’s existing budget and private sector.

Legal Implications

The Council is the accountable body for delivery of the schemes within our allocated funding. As such we have Grant Funding Agreements in place signed by the

delivery partners and grant recipients. All partners/recipients funded through this scheme are required to complete a Subsidy Declaration in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Risk Assessment

Due to the annualised nature of the grant schemes and the wider economic uncertainty and budgetary challenges facing the UK, there is a risk that the Government may modify their commitment to this funding either in whole or in part. This risk is increased in likelihood if we fail to spend the funding in line with the agreed Investment Plan and timescales, although this rule was relaxed for first year spend. The Project Team have funding agreements in place to commit the funding each year with delivery partners and the Delivery Plan (with regular project review meetings) will monitor progress against targets to minimise and mitigate these risks.

Impact on Climate Change

Climate change and the necessity for businesses to transition to a Low Carbon Economy is a recurring theme within the SPF Investment Plan. All grant schemes ask applicants how their proposed activities support business decarbonisation. The rural uplift will also include a scheme to fund Community Energy Projects to support community-led renewable energy initiatives.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Individual projects will have their own equality impact assessed as part of the detailed planning for delivery. Grant schemes developed offer an open application process with equality safeguards to ensure equal and equitable access to the funding. Communication plans have been devised to identify 'touch points' for engaging with hard-to-reach business groups to ensure they are aware of the opportunities available through these schemes.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The SPF Investment Plan and Rural Uplift directly address a number of objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2020-24, as set out in the report below.

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector
- Incubation space, grow-on space and places to expand
- Promote low carbon communities - decarbonisation
- Promote a local economy - People living, working, eating, shopping and spending locally
- Greater digital connectivity in rural areas

- Support for clean growth industries
- A thriving agricultural sector that showcases farm-to-fork practices and low food miles to market

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer:

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: LT 23/5/23

Statutory Officer:

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: LT 23/5/23

Chief Officer:

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: LT 23/5/23 and 30/5/23 (Richard Marsh, Director of Place)

Performance and risk:

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 23/5/23

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader

Email: zlentell@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234298

Background papers:

None